



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### Seend Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Road, Seend, Melksham  
SN12 6NJ

#### Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Wiltshire Council (no longer called County Council)

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2014

Date of last inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> March 2009

School's unique reference number: 126414

Headteacher: Mrs Jackie Chalk

Inspector's name and number: Mr Mark Stratta 737

#### School context

Seend Church of England School is a smaller than average-sized primary school primarily serving the village. Almost all of the pupils are White British. A very small proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special needs supported at school action is average. The number supported at school action plus or with a statement is below average. The progress of all children is above the national average. Since the previous inspection there has been a change of headteacher and other significant teaching staff. The school has also completed a major building extension.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Seend as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The outstanding Christian ethos of the school in which all pupils are nurtured and valued highly.
- The impact that the emphasis on Christian values has in ensuring high standards of behaviour and relationships between all members of the school community.
- The commitment and vision of the senior leadership to ensure that the school continually reviews its Christian vision, distinctiveness and effectiveness.
- The opportunities that learners have to engage in high quality experiences that develop a personal spirituality.

#### Areas to improve

- Improve the rigour of governor evaluation of the school as a church school by introducing a calendar for monitoring and evaluation.
- Increase opportunities for pupil involvement in the planning and leading of worship.
- Improve pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

### **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners**

Christian values lie at the heart of the school. Respect, forgiveness, tolerance, honesty and friendship are deeply embedded and lived out by the whole school community so that the strong Christian ethos is evident to all. Children effectively articulate how these values impact upon their lives and affect behaviour choices and they relate these to bible stories such as the Good Samaritan. Pupils are encouraged to recognise and celebrate these values in one another. As a result, behaviour is excellent, children feel valued and special and thrive in an ethos conducive to good quality learning. Pupils are very well supported to become responsible citizens an example of which is the 'buddy' system whereby an older pupil supports a young child. Children therefore feel safe and happy and attendance is very good. One parent stated that, 'Children are taught to love and care from early on and values such as tolerance help them to grow into good people.' The high level of care and mutual respect is reflected in the quality of relationships that exist between all members of the school community including vulnerable learners. Any problems that do occur are sensitively and quickly dealt with. Christian symbols and exciting, vibrant displays support the ethos of the school. Respect, forgiveness, tolerance, honesty and friendship are deeply embedded and lived out by the whole school community. A tangible commitment to excellence and enjoyment drives the delivery of a wide range of enrichment activities and clubs beyond the purely academic so that the 'whole' child is catered for. The school choir and netball team have won awards for their achievements. Fundraising and charity events include harvest collections for the Melksham Food Bank and shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child amongst others and are a practical demonstration of the school's values in action. Service and respect are shown as children lay a wreath at a Remembrance Day service each year and visit local residential homes to sing carols. These experiences all have an outstanding impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Worship is regarded as a key element of school life and makes an outstanding impact on the spiritual development of children and adults. During worship links are made between the teachings of Jesus, behaviour and real life experiences. Celebratory or whole class performance assemblies take place on a Friday and parents value the opportunity to attend these. Children enjoy worship because it is 'a good time of community; time to reflect; an opportunity to share and celebrate.' They understand the purpose of worship, its different components and speak positively about it. For example, they know that the candle reminds us of 'Jesus, the Light of the World'. Prayer is seen as very important - in addition to worship time children say grace before meals and a prayer at the end of the day. On occasions they write prayers which are then said in school. During class worship times children experience a range of activities such as stilling, diaries of reflection, celebration and responding to local and national issues. Easter, Harvest, Christingle and Leavers services are held in the church and are well supported. Children sing beautifully and are fully engaged in worship as evidenced at the Easter Service. Parents report the positive impact that worship has and state that children often sing hymns and songs at home that they have learnt in school. One child is reading her bible every day. The headteacher provides strong leadership and regularly meets with children to evaluate the quality and impact of worship. On occasions children lead aspects of worship, for example, the Head Boy and Head Girl leading the Easter service and celebration assemblies, but few opportunities exist at present for children to plan and lead for themselves. Pupils identify this as an area they would like to develop. Regular evaluation therefore ensures that there are continual improvements in the delivery and content of worship. Visitors such as the Open the Book team and other ecumenical groups are popular and enrich the children's worship experience. As a result, collective worship is a varied and highly positive experience for the whole worshipping community.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

A focus for development at the last inspection, Religious Education is now very effectively and enthusiastically led and managed. RE has a high profile within the curriculum and is normally taught in 1-2 week blocks in order to maximize impact. Effective systems are in place for assessing, recording and tracking pupil progress and for informing future planning. Pupils' standards of attainment are above national expectations. Teaching is always good and frequently outstanding. RE books are distinctly 'different and special'. Homework is set when appropriate, for example, at the start of the Easter theme Year 2 pupils were asked to find out what they do at Easter. Pupils enjoy their learning and, in all lessons observed, showed high levels of engagement. Staff skilfully weave the school's Christian values and 'learning gems/powers' into lessons so that children are constantly being reminded of them and given opportunities to apply them. This was evident when a Year 6 child, within a lesson looking at Christian symbols, used the word 'forgiveness' when looking at a cross. This was affirmed by the teacher as one of the school's core values. In every class children are encouraged to reflect as a key learning value – reflect upon their learning and upon their beliefs. As a result, pupils display high level thinking, empathy and reflection. Year 5/6 pupils considered the concept of sacrifice and what is the hardest thing to give away? "Time – because you can't get it back." Year 3/4 children considered the characteristics of people who inspire them. Y1/2 pupils expressed their feelings about the Easter service in church. "I was inspired by the song 'It's a new day'." Whilst the youngest children were learning about the Easter story through making an Easter garden, one child asked, "Why is it called Good Friday if Jesus died?" Children visit Salisbury Cathedral so that they understand they belong to a wider church community, the Diocese. They have less knowledge about the Christian church as a global multi-cultural community so this is a focus for development.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding**

The Headteacher is very clear about her vision for the school – that children should receive the best possible education they can, based upon firm Christian values. On her appointment she led a review of the mission statement and values upon which the outstanding ethos of the school is based. These values are shared by staff, governors, children and parents who overwhelmingly believe that the school's Christian ethos makes a difference to their children. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's current position and what needs to be done next because they monitor and evaluate the school as a church school. However, currently there is no calendar or cycle of monitoring to ensure the regularity and rigour of what happens when. Policies are rooted in the school's values as, for example, the behaviour policy refers to forgiveness. Collective Worship and Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) education are current priorities within the school development plan. The school website is a comprehensive source of information that is also explicit about Seend's church school distinctiveness. Parents feel very well informed through newsletters, the new text messaging service and informal communication. They appreciate the way their views are sought on different aspects of school life. The Home School Agreement includes specific reference to home, school and church links so that no one can be in any doubt as to the status of the school and its Christian foundation. Links with the church are strong and include a regular school contribution to the parish magazine. Active foundation governors and the incumbent are highly supportive. The School Council make a positive difference to the school by giving constructive suggestions to improve the environment, feedback on teaching and learning, instigating fundraising activities and a range of other initiatives. Seend Primary School has an excellent reputation in the local area and all members regard it as a special place.

SIAMS report, April 2014, Seend Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary, School, School Road, Seend, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6NJ.